

REMARKS

This application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Office action.

The present application was filed as a Request for Continued Examination November 24, 2003. On page 2 of the RCE form submitted on such date, applicant affirmatively petitioned for and provided payment for a Rule 103(c) limited suspension of action for a period of two months. The termination date of such suspension corresponding to the date of filing of the present amendment.

Accordingly, the Office action issued January 6, 2004 is necessarily premature, as it was issued prior to the termination of the suspension period requested by and paid for by the applicant. For this reason, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection put forth by such action, as well as consideration of the present claims, including both those originally filed with the RCE, as well as those added by the present amendment.

Applicant notes further that, in the event that next action on the merits includes the rejection of one or more claims, such action should be non-final, as it would represent the first proper action on the merits in this RCE.

Entry of the above amendments is earnestly solicited.
Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance
be issued in this case.

Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in
the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested
to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge the fee of \$18.00 for the extra dependent
claim added herewith, to Deposit Account No. 25-0120.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this,
concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any
overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional
fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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EJ/psf